



Welcome to my weekly series!
ASK THE LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL

Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

SPRIGS & TWIGS HAS BEEN DESIGNATED AN ESSENTIAL BUSINESS AND WE ARE OPEN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH CT GOVERNOR NED LAMONT'S EXECUTIVE ORDER 7H, DATED MARCH 20, 2020.

Hi Linda- I have a 9 year old Japanese maple. This year the bark of the trunk is starting to peel. I broke off a piece and saw beetle-like bugs. There weren't a ton of them, they may have been there just for shade? I love my maple. What should I do? ...Anna



Hi Anna,

The photos you sent me show a tree that was planted too deeply into the soil. At the proper planting depth, the trunk (stem) of the tree should flare out away from the base of the tree. What I see is a trunk that has no flare and has straight sides coming up out of the soil (like a telephone pole). The base of the tree has been smothered and is rotting under the mulch that was piled up around the base of the tree which has caused the protective bark to peel off. Unfortunately, this tree is not going to survive. You can buy some time by carefully digging around the base of the tree down to where you see the root flare. You may have to dig down a bit. If you come across any roots growing above the root flare, carefully cut them off back at the stem. Leave the stem and root flare exposed. This will help the stem to dry out. Remove any excess mulch you have around the tree and put down about 1" of new mulch around the base of the tree (2-3' wide) without touching the tree. This will help keep the roots cool and moist. Do not remove any loose bark. Let it fall off naturally. The tree will try to repair itself by covering the wound with new wood, but it will take a long time (years). Also, do not apply any type of tar or paint over the wound where the bark is missing. I would also suggest you check the mulch level on the other trees on your property and do the same thing. Good Luck.

EMAIL OR MAIL YOUR QUESTIONS TO:
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